FOUR

ELEGIES.

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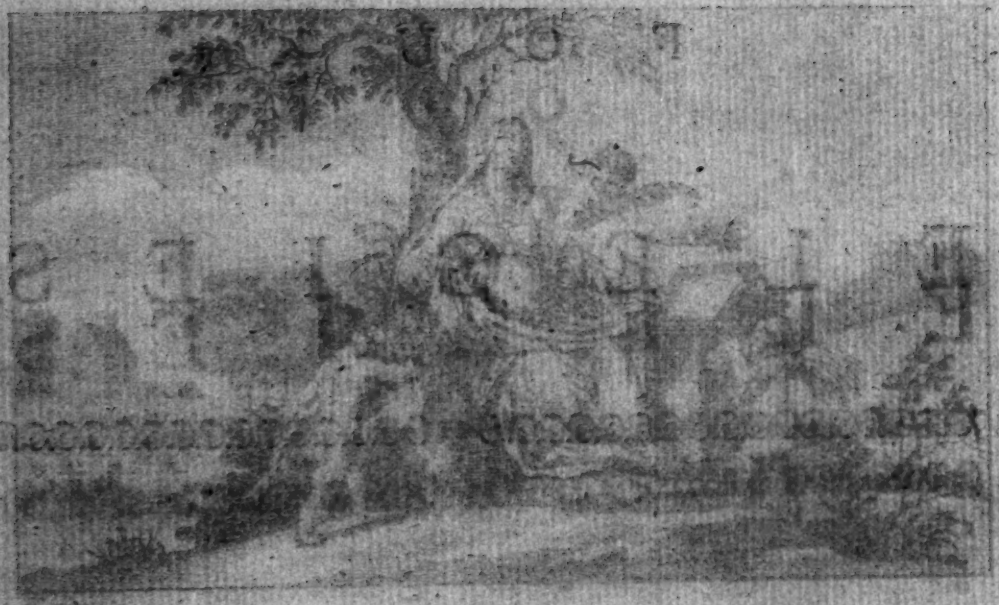

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ELEGIES:

DESCRIPTIVE and MORAL.

LONDON:

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MDCCLX.

DESCRIPTIVE and MORAL

ELEGIES:

FOUR ELEGIES.

ELEGY I.

Written at the APPROACH of SPRING.

STERN Winter hence with all his Train removes;
And chearful Skies and limpid Streams are ſeen;
Thick-ſprouting Foliage decorates the Groves;
Reviving Herbage robes the Fields in Green.

Yet lovelier Scenes ſhall crown th' advancing Year,
When blooming Spring's full Bounty is diſplay'd;
The Smile of Beauty ev'ry Vale ſhall wear;
The Voice of Song enliven ev'ry Shade.

O Fancy, paint not coming Days too fair!
Oft for the Proſpects ſprightly MAY ſhould yield,
Rain-pouring Clouds have darken'd all the Air,
Or Snows untimely whiten'd o'er the Field:

But ſhould kind Spring her wonted Bounty ſhow'r,
The Smile of Beauty and the Voice of Song;
If gloomy Thought the human Mind o'erpow'r,
Ev'n vernal Hours glide unenjoy'd along.

I ſhun the Scenes where madd'ning Paſſion raves,
Where Pride and Folly high Dominion hold,
And unrelenting Avarice drives her Slaves
O'er proſtrate Virtue in Purſuit of Gold:

The graſſy Lane, the wood-ſurrounded Field,
The rude Stone Fence with fragrant Wall-Flow'rs gay,
The Clay-built Cot, to me more Pleaſure yield
Than all the Pomp imperial Domes diſplay:

And yet ev'n here amid theſe ſecret Shades,
Theſe ſimple Scenes of unreprov'd Delight,
Affliction's Iron Hand my Breaſt invades,
And Death's dread Dart is ever in my Sight.

While genial Suns to genial Show'rs ſucceed;
(The Air all Mildneſs, and the Earth all Bloom;)
While Herds and Flocks range ſportive o'er the Mead,
Crop the ſweet Herb, and ſnuff the rich Perfume;

O why alone to hapleſs Man deny'd
To taſte the Bliſs inferior Beings boaſt?
O why this Fate that Fear and Pain divide
His few ſhort Hours on Earth's delightful Coaſt?

Ah ceaſe---no more of Providence complain!
'Tis Senſe of Guilt that wakes the Mind to Woe,
Gives Force to Fear, adds Energy to Pain,
And palls each Joy by Heav'n indulg'd below:

Why elſe the ſmiling Infant-Train ſo bleſt,
Ere dear-bought Knowledge ends the Peace within,
Or wild Deſire inflames the Youthful Breaſt,
Or ill Propenſion ripens into Sin?

As to the bleating Tenants of the Field,
As to the ſportive Warblers on the Trees,
To Them their Joys ſincere the Seaſons yield,
And all their Days and all their Proſpects pleaſe;

Such Joys were mine when from the peopled Streets,
Where on THAMESIS' Banks I liv'd immur'd,
The new-blown Fields that breath'd a thouſand Sweets,
To SURRY's wood-crown'd Hills my Steps allur'd:

O happy Hours, beyond Recov'ry fled!
What ſhare I now "that can your Loſs repay,"
While o'er my Mind theſe Glooms of Thought are ſpread,
And veil the Light of Life's Meridian Ray?

Is there no Power this Darkneſs to remove?
The long-loſt Joys of EDEN to reſtore?
Or raiſe our Views to happier Seats above,
Where Fear and Pain and Death ſhall be no more?

Yes thoſe there are who know a SAVIOUR's Love
The long-loſt Joys of EDEN can reſtore,
And raiſe their Views to happier Seats above,
Where Fear and Pain and Death ſhall be no more:

Theſe grateful ſhare the Gift of Nature's Hand;
And in the varied Scenes that round them ſhine,
(The Fair, the Rich, the Awful, and the Grand)
Admire th' amazing Workmanſhip divine.

Blows not a Flow'ret in th' enamell'd Vale,
Shines not a Pebble where the Riv'let ſtrays,
Sports not an Inſect on the ſpicy Gale,
But claims their Wonder and excites their Praiſe.

For them ev'n vernal Nature looks more gay,
For them more lively Hues the Fields adorn;
To them more fair the faireſt Smile of Day,
To them more ſweet the ſweeteſt Breath of Morn.

They feel the Bliſs that Hope and Faith ſupply;
They paſs ſerene th' appointed Hours that bring
The Day that wafts them to the Realms on high,
The Day that centers in Eternal Spring.

ELEGY II.

Written in the HOT WEATHER, *July*, 1757.

THREE Hours from Noon the paſſing Shadow ſhows,
The ſultry Breeze glides faintly o'er the Plains,
The dazzling ETHER fierce and fiercer glows,
And human Nature ſcarce its Rage ſuſtains.

Now ſtill and vacant is the duſty Street,
And ſtill and vacant where yon Fields extend,
Save where thoſe Swains, oppreſs'd with Toil and Heat,
The graſſy Harveſt of the Mead attend.

Loſt is the lively Aſpect of the Ground,
Low are the Springs, the reedy Ditches dry;
No verdant Spot in all the Vale is found,
Save what yon Stream's unfailing Stores ſupply.

Where

Where are the Flow'rs that made the Garden gay?
Where is their Beauty, where their Fragrance fled?
Their Stems relax, fast fall their Leaves away,
They fade and mingle with their dusty Bed:

All but the Natives of the torrid Zone,
What ARAIG's Wilds, or PERU's Fields display,
Pleas'd with a Clime that imitates their own,
They lovelier bloom beneath the parching Ray.

Where is wild Nature's Heart-reviving Song,
That fill'd in genial Spring the verdant Bow'rs?
Silent in gloomy Woods the feather'd Throng
Pine thro' this long, long Course of sultry Hours.

Where is the Dream of Bliss by Summer brought?
The Walk along the Riv'let-water'd Vale?
The Field with Verdure clad, with Fragrance fraught,
The Sun mild-beaming, and the fanning Gale?

The

The weary Soul Imagination chears,
Her pleaſing Colours paint the Future gay;
Time paſſes on, the Truth itſelf appears,
The pleaſing Colours inſtant fade away:

In diff'rent Seaſons diff'rent Joys we place,
And theſe ſhall Spring ſupply, and Summer theſe;
Yet frequent Storms the Bloom of Spring deface,
And Summer ſcarcely brings a Day to pleaſe.

O for ſome ſecret ſhady cool Receſs!
Some Gothic Dome o'erhung with darkſome Trees,
Where thick damp Walls this raging Heat repreſs;
Where the long Iſle invites the lazy Breeze:

But why theſe Plaints?—Amid his Waſtes of Sand,
Far more than this the wand'ring ARAB feels;
Far more the INDIAN in COLUMBUS' Land,
While Phœbus o'er him rolls his fiery Wheels:

Far more the ſenſible of Mind ſuſtains,
Rack'd with the poignant Pangs of Fear or Shame;
The hopeleſs Lover, bound in Beauty's Chains,
And He, whom Envy robs of hard-earn'd Fame:

He, who a Father or a Mother mourns,
Or lovely Conſort loſt in early Bloom:
He, whom the dreaded Rage of Fever burns,
Or ſlow Diſeaſe leads ling'ring to the Tomb---

Leſt Man ſhould ſink beneath the preſent Pain;
Leſt Man ſhould triumph in the preſent Joy;
For Him th' unvarying "Laws of Heav'n ordain,"
Hope in his Ills, and to his Bliſs Alloy.

Fierce and oppreſſive is the Sun we ſhare,
Yet not unuſeful to our humid Soil;
Hence ſhall our Fruits a richer Flavour bear,
Hence ſhall our Plains with riper Harveſts ſmile;

Reflect

Reflect and be content--- for Mankind's Good
Heav'n gives the due Degrees of Drought or Rain;
To-morrow ceaſeleſs Show'rs may ſwell the Flood,
Nor ſoon yon Sun riſe blazing fierce again:

Ev'n now behold the grateful Change at hand,
Hark, in the Eaſt loud bluſt'ring Gales ariſe;
Wide, and more wide the dark'ning Clouds expand,
And diſtant Light'nings flaſh along the Skies:

O in the awful Concert of the Storm,
While Hail and Rain, and Wind and Thunder join!
Let the great Ruler's Praiſe my Song inform,
Let Wonder, Rev'rence, Gratitude be mine.

ELEGY III.

Written in HARVEST.

FAREWEL the pleaſant Violet-ſcented Shade;
The primros'd Hill, and daiſy-mantled Mead;
The furrow'd Land, with ſpringing Corn array'd;
The ſunny Wall with bloomy Branches ſpread:

Farewel the Bow'r with bluſhing Roſes gay;
Farewel the fragrant Trefoil-purpled Field;
Farewel the Walk thro' Rows of new-mown Hay,
When Ev'ning Breezes mingled Odours yield;

Farewel to theſe --- now round the lonely Farms,
Where jocund Plenty deigns to fix her Seat;
Th' Autumnal Landſcape op'ning all its Charms,
Declares kind Nature's annual Work compleat.

In diff'rent Parts what diff'rent Views delight,
Where on neat Bridges waves the golden Grain;
Or where the bearded Barley dazzling white,
Spreads o'er the ſteepy Slope or wide Champain.

The Smile of Morning gleams along the Hills;
And wakeful Labour calls her Sons abroad;
They leave with chearful Look their lowly Vills,
And bid the Fields reſign their ripen'd Load.

To various Taſks addreſs the ruſtic Band,
And here the Scythe, and there the Sickle weild;
Or rear the new-bound Sheaves along the Land;
Or range in Heaps the Produce of the Field.

Some build the Shocks, ſome load the ſpacious Wains,
Some lead to ſhelt'ring Barns the fragrant Corn,
Some form tall Ricks that tow'ring o'er the Plains,
For many a Mile the rural Yards adorn.---

Th' incloſure Gates thrown open all around,
The Stubble's peopled by the Gleaning Throng,
The rattling Car with verdant Branches crown'd,
And joyful Swains that raiſe the clam'rous Song,

Soon mark glad Harveſt o'er---Ye rural Lords
Whoſe wide Domains o'er ALBION's Iſle extend;
Think whoſe kind Hand your annual Wealth affords,
And bid to Heav'n your grateful Praiſe aſcend.

For tho' no Gift ſpontaneous of the Ground
Roſe theſe fair Crops that made your Vallies ſmile,
Tho' the blithe Youth of every Hamlet round,
Purſued for theſe thro' many a Day their Toil;

Yet what avail your Labours or your Cares?
Can all your Labours all your Cares ſupply,
Bright Suns or ſoft'ning Show'rs or tepid Airs,
Or one indulgent Influence of the Sky?

For

For Providence decrees that we obtain
With Toil each Bleſſing deſtin'd to our Uſe;
But means to teach us that our Toil is vain,
If He the Bounty of his Hand refuſe.

Yet ALBION, blame not what thy Crime demands,
While this ſad Truth the bluſhing Muſe betrays,
More frequent echoes o'er thy Harveſt Lands
The Voice of Riot than the Voice of Praiſe.

Prolifick tho' thy Fields and mild thy Clime,
Know Realms once fam'd for Fields and Climes as fair,
Have fell the Prey of Famine, War, and Time,
And now no Semblance of their Glory bear.

Aſk PALESTINE, proud ASIA's early Boaſt,
Where now the Groves that pour'd her Wine and Oil,
Where the fair Towns that crown'd her wealthy Coaſt,
Where the glad Swains that till'd her fertile Soil;

Aſk,

Aſk, and behold, and mourn her hapleſs Fall!
Where roſe fair Towns, where wav'd the golden Grain,
Thrown on the naked Rock and mould'ring Wall,
Pale Want and Ruin hold their dreary Reign.

Where JORDAN's Vallies ſmil'd in living Green,
Where SHARON's Flow'rs diſclos'd their varied Hues;
The wand'ring Pilgrim views the alter'd Scene,
And drops the Tear of Pity as he views.

Aſk GRECIA mourning o'er her ruin'd Tow'rs;
Where now the Proſpects charm'd her Bards of old,
Her corn-clad Mountains and Elyſian Bow'rs,
And ſilver Streams thro' fragrant Meadows roll'd.

Where Freedom's Praiſe along the Vale was heard,
And Town to Town return'd the favour'd Sound;
Where Patriot War her awful Standard rear'd,
And brav'd the Millions PERSIA pour'd around:

There

There Freedom's Praiſe no more the Valley chears,
There Patriot-War no more her Banner waves;
Nor Bard, nor Sage, nor martial Chief appears,
But ſtern Barbarians rule a Land of Slaves.

Of mighty Realms are ſuch the poor Remains?
Of mighty Realms that fell when mad with Pow'r,
They lur'd each Vice to revel on their Plains;
Each Monſter doom'd their Offspring to devour!

O Albion! wouldſt thou ſhun their mournful Fates,
To ſhun their Follies and their Crime be thine;
And was to linger in thy fair Retreats,
The radiant Virtues, Progeny divine!

Bright Truth the nobleſt of the ſacred Band,
Sweet Peace whoſe Brow no ruffling Frown deforms,
Fair Charity with ever open Hand,
And Courage ſmiling midſt a thouſand Storms.

O haſte to grace our Iſle ye lovely Train!
So may the Pow'r whoſe Hand all Bleſſing yields,
Give her fam'd Glories ever to remain,
And crown with annual Wealth her laughing Fields.

ELEGY IV.

Written at the Approach of WINTER.

THE Sun far Southward bends his annual Way,
The bleak North-eaſt Wind lays the Foreſts bare,
The Fruit ungather'd quits the naked Spray,
And dreary Winter reigns o'er Earth and Air.

No Mark of vegetable Life is ſeen,
No Bird to Bird repeats his tuneful Call;
Save the dark Leaves of ſome rude Evergreen,
Save the lone Red-breaſt on the Moſs-grown Wall.

Where are the ſprightly Scenes by Spring ſupply'd,
The May-flow'r'd Hedges ſcenting ev'ry Breeze;
The white Flocks ſcatt'ring o'er the Mountain Side,
The Woodlarks warbling on the blooming Trees?

Where is gay Summer's ſportive Inſect Train,
That in green Fields on painted Pinions play'd?
The Herd at Morn wide-paſturing o'er the Plain,
Or throng'd at Noon-tide in the Willow Shade?

Where is brown Autumn's Ev'ning mild and ſtill,
What Time the ripen'd Corn freſh Fragrance yields,
What Time the Village peoples all the Hill,
And loud Shouts eccho o'er the Harveſt Fields?

To former Scenes our Fancy thus returns,
To former Scenes that little pleas'd when here!
Our Winter chills us and our Summer burns,
Yet we diſlike the Changes of the Year.

To happier Lands then reſtleſs Fancy flies,
Where INDIAN Streams thro' green Savannah's flow;
Where brighter Suns and ever-tranquil Skies,
Bid new Fruits ripen and new Flow'rets blow.

Let Truth theſe fairer happier Lands ſurvey,
There half the Year deſcends in watry Storms;
Or Nature ſickens in the Blaze of Day,
And one brown Hue the Sun-burnt Plain deforms,

There oft as toiling in the maizey Fields,
Or Homeward paſſing on the ſhadeleſs Way,
His joyous Life the weary Lab'rer yields,
And inſtant drops beneath the deathful Ray.

Who dreams of Nature free from Nature's Strife?
Who dreams of conſtant Happineſs below?
The Hope-flush'd Ent'rer on the Stage of Life;
The Youth, to Knowledge unchaſtis'd by Woe.

For me, long toil'd on many a weary Road,
Led by falſe Hope in ſearch of many a Joy;
I find in Earth's bleak Clime no bleſt Abode,
No Place, no Seaſon ſacred from Annoy:

For me, while Winter rages round the Plains,
With his dark Days I'll human Life compare;
Not thoſe more fraught with Clouds and Winds and Rains,
Than this with pining Pain and anxious Care.

O whence this wond'rous Turn of Mind our Fate!
Whate'er the Seaſon or the Place poſſeſt,
We ever murmur at our preſent State;
And yet the Thought of parting breaks our Reſt:

Why elſe when heard in Ev'ning's ſolemn Gloom,
Does the ſad Knell that ſounding on the Plain,
Tolls ſome poor lifeleſs Body to the Tomb,
Thus thrill my Breaſt with melancholy Pain?

The Voice of Reaſon ecchoes in my Ear,
Thus thoſe ere long muſt join thy kindred Clay;
No more theſe "Noſtrils breathe the vital Air,"
No more theſe Eyelids open on the Day.

O Winter, round me ſpread thy joyleſs Reign,
Thy threat'ning Skies in duſky Horrors dreſt;
Of thy dread Rage no longer I'll complain,
Nor aſk an EDEN for a tranſient Gueſt.

Enough has Heav'n indulg'd of Joy below,
To tempt our Tarriance in this lov'd Retreat;
Enough has Heav'n ordain'd of uſeful Woe,
To make us languiſh for a happier Seat.

There is, who deems all Climes, all Seaſons fair,
There is, who knows no reſtleſs Paſſion's Strife;
Contentment ſmiling at each idle Care;
Contentment thankful for the Gift of Life;

She finds in Winter many a Scene to pleaſe;
The Morning Landſcape fring'd with Froſt-Work gay,
The Sun at Noon ſeen thro' the leafleſs Trees,
The clear calm Ether at the Cloſe of Day:

She marks th' Advantage Storms and Clouds beſtow,
When bluſt'ring CAURUS purifies the Air,
When moiſt AQUARIUS pours the fleecy Snow,
That makes th' impregnate Glebe a richer Harveſt bear:

She bids for all our grateful Praiſe ariſe,
To Him whoſe Mandate ſpake the World to form;
Gave Spring's gay Bloom, and Summer's chearful Skies,
And Autumn's Corn-clad Field and Winter's ſounding
Storm.

HYMN, from PSALM 8th.

ALMIGHTY Pow'r! amazing are thy Ways;
Above our Knowledge, and above our Praiſe!
How all thy Works thy Excellence diſplay!
How fair, how great, how wonderful are they!
Thy Hand yon wide-extended Heav'n uprais'd,
Yon wide-extended Heav'n with Stars emblaz'd,
Where each bright Orb, ſince Time his Courſe begun,
Has roll'd a mighty World, or ſhin'd a Sun:
Stupendous Thought! how ſinks all human Race!
A Point an Atom in the Field of Space!
Yet ev'n to us, O LORD, thy Care extends,
Thy Bounty feeds us, and thy Pow'r defends;
Yet ev'n to us, as Delegates of Thee,
Thou giv'ſt Dominion over Land and Sea;
Whate'er, or walks on Earth, or flits in Air;
Whate'er of Life the wat'ry Regions bear;
All theſe are ours, and for th' extenſive Claim,
We owe due Homage to thy ſacred Name!
Almighty Pow'r! how wond'rous are thy Ways!
How far above our Knowledge and our Praiſe!